

SENATE RESOLUTION 120

By McNally

A RESOLUTION to honor and recognize Bell's Campground Cemetery on the occasion of its bicentennial celebration.

WHEREAS, it is fitting that the members of this General Assembly should salute those revered burial grounds in this State which have provided an honorable resting place for Tennesseans for countless generations; and

WHEREAS, one such hallowed place is Bell's Campground Cemetery, which in May of 2009 celebrates its bicentennial anniversary, commemorating 200 years of serving as the final resting place for many of Tennessee's finest citizens; and

WHEREAS, Bell's Campground was founded in May of 1809, when early settler John Menifee granted a two-acre plot of land to seven trustees to use for a community worship and meeting place; and

WHEREAS, some time after 1816, John Menifee sold all of his property to Samuel Bell, a member of a family that is thought to be the second family to settle the area; with the acquisition of this property, the Bell family holdings reached a total of 1,100 acres; and

WHEREAS, in 1865, one month after the end of the Civil War, the Bell family deeded supplementary land to campground trustees for use as a community cemetery; since then, the trustees have been responsible for the upkeep of the cemetery, which is one of their more demanding tasks; and

WHEREAS, the trustees purchased 3.57 additional acres from an adjoining property owner in 1961 to be used as an extension to the cemetery; the proceeds from the sale of these burial plots contribute toward the upkeep of the cemetery; and

WHEREAS, for many years, the grounds have been extremely well tended, financed by contributions from the general public and the sale of burial plots; and

WHEREAS, one longtime tradition at Bell's Campground Cemetery is the Decoration Day, or Memorial Day, service, which has been documented in records from the early trustees until now; and

WHEREAS, the Decoration Day tradition at the Campground is thought to have begun during the late 1860s in honor of those men who lost their lives in the Civil War; at the present time, the fourth Sunday in May is designated as the date for Decoration services, though the observance was historically held on a Saturday; and

WHEREAS, this year, in honor of the cemetery's bicentennial anniversary, month-long festivities will be held in May, commemorating the event with weekend music, a youth rally on May 9, a family day on May 16, and a week of revival preaching each evening between May 17 and May 23, all culminating on Decoration Day; and

WHEREAS, continuing a tradition that is has lasted for more than a century, the 2009 Decoration service will be held on Sunday, May 24; and

WHEREAS, the distinguished trustees of Bell's Campground Cemetery include Chairman Robert E. Mayes, Vice Chairman Don Groner, Secretary and Manager Spence Meyers, Treasurer Harry Norman, Event Coordinator Sherry Smith, David Jennings, who oversees the newsletter, and Ronnie Waugh; the Grounds Manager of the cemetery is Lisa Sinard; and

WHEREAS, on this joyous occasion, the trustees are exceedingly grateful for the work of trustee Sherry Smith, who has spent many dedicated hours planning and coordinating the bicentennial celebration, and to Lisa Sinard and her husband Terry, who have made improvements on the grounds to preserve the beauty of the cemetery; and

WHEREAS, Bell's Campground Cemetery is a highly esteemed monument in Tennessee heritage, offering facilities that have been used by families for generations as a place of worship, funerals, weddings, revivals, and gathering with family and friends, and it should be specially honored for two centuries of existence; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED SIXTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, that we hereby honor and congratulate Bell's Campground Cemetery upon the occasion of its bicentennial, thank the trustees for passing on a legacy that is so deeply woven into the fabric of Tennessee history, and extend to them our best wishes for a joyous celebration and success in all their future endeavors.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.